

VZCZCXRO2852
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #0858/01 1021437
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 121437Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1702
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7978
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2518
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1854
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5855
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5616
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2229
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000858

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkey Awaits Baghdad's Response to Protest Note

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said Turkey will not remain indifferent to moves threatening its peace, saying necessary measures will be taken if Iraq fails to respond to Turkey's note of protest. Gul was speaking in reference to recent remarks made by Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani about consequences of possible Turkish interference in Kirkuk. "Our neighbors are responsible for blocking harmful activities against Turkey on their territory," Gul said, adding if Iraq lacks the power to eliminate the PKK, international law provided the necessary means for that. Gul said Turkey has no secret agenda on Iraq other than unity and peace. Papers speculate Gul's words signaled a possible cross-border military incursion into Iraq.

Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) spokesman Levent Bilman told the press yesterday Turkey deals with the Iraqi administration in Baghdad, not with Barzani. Bilman stressed Turkey expected "decisive and urgent" Iraqi steps for ensuring border security, capturing the PKK terrorists, and abiding by UN resolutions. Radikal says Ankara has urged Baghdad to "declare the PKK a terror organization, cut the military support given to the PKK, and silence Barzani." Milliyet reports the US Administration told Ankara that Barzani's interview with al-Arabiyah television was made six weeks ago, and warned Barzani as well to refrain from making controversial statements.

Editorial Commentary on Barzani Remarks, Iraq

Semih Idiz, commenting in the mainstream daily Milliyet, urges a "gentle approach" to dealing with Iraqi Kurdish leader Barzani: "Turkey's foreign policy position could be described as 'foreign policy in a minefield.'" Geographically, Turkey is surrounded with minefield-like neighbors. If tensions ease in the Balkans, new problems start in the Caucasus or in the Middle East. That is why Turkish diplomacy is appreciated all over the world. Ankara has to

develop 'stability tactics' each time, which is not easy and not possible for every country to manage. Turks are very emotional people and just for their own political interests, the opposition in Turkey, always encourages harsh reactions from the public. The latest example is the response to Barzani's remarks. Turkey is a serious country and should not fall into Barzani's trap. By talking to Washington and some other capitals on the issue, Ankara is not making a mistake -- on the contrary, they are advancing down the correct path. There is no hostility in the history between Turks and the Kurds -- they fought together against mutual enemies. That is why, Barzani, who is squeezed between being a tribal leader and a political leader, should be approached gently. For some, this could be rather degrading, but, this is the correct path for a serious state to follow."

Cengiz Candar, writing in the economic-political daily Referans, argues that it is in Ankara's interest to develop good relations with Iraqi Kurds: "If Ankara is concerned about a divided Iraq created by Kurdish independence - and it seems like it is - then Ankara should support the presence of a Kurdish President in Iraq, Kurds getting a good share in the government, and an autonomous Kurdish administration in the North. It is very much in Turkey's interest that the Kurds manage to integrate into a federal Iraq. It is not possible for any country to have influence in the Middle East without taking a role in Iraq. Neither Sunni nor Shiite Arabs of Iraq could help Turkey have influence in the Middle East, but the Kurds could."

Early Elections Debate

Milliyet reports State Minister Ali Babacan said Turkey should go to early elections in order "not to waste time." Babacan believes elections should be held two months prior to the scheduled date of November, to allow the Turkish parliament to begin its new

ANKARA 00000858 002 OF 002

legislative year on October 1. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul reportedly said the date for the elections has been fixed and that changes would be made only on technicalities. Milliyet says the ruling AKP wants to hold snap polls right after the presidential elections in an effort to prevent a loss of votes if Erdogan is elected president.

EU Draft New Pretext for Delaying Changes to Article 301
Liberal Radikal reports Justice Minister Cemil Cicek said yesterday changes to the controversial Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, the law making it a crime to "insult Turkishness," will be discussed after seeing the fate of the "framework draft for the struggle against racism and xenophobia," brought to the agenda of the EU by term president Germany. The draft recognizes as an offense denial of any genocide in EU member countries, bringing prison sentences from one to three years for denial. Radikal says Turkey believes the draft will name as a crime denial of Armenian genocide. Cicek criticized those whom advise Turkey to scrap Article 301, saying "they should first look at themselves."

TV Highlights
NTV, 6.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Debate over procedures for the presidential election: Prime Minister Erdogan said talks with the opposition parties on the presidential elections would be "a waste of time." Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc said participation of over 184 lawmakers in the first round of voting would be enough to hold the presidential elections. The main opposition CHP insists that the presidential elections will be invalid if less than 367 deputies participate in the first round of voting.

- Turkish General Staff (TGS) Chief General Yasar Buyukanit is to hold a press conference on Thursday. Buyukanit is expected to talk about the controversial remarks of Massoud Barzani and a "leaked" diary belonging to a retired admiral alleging military takeover attempts in 2004, but avoid any mention of presidential elections.

- Turkey's Constitutional Court cancelled part of a law allowing real estate sales to foreigners. The scrapped part allowed the cabinet to increase the amount of land owned by individual foreigners in Turkey by up to 30 hectares.

International News

- Russia and Greek Cyprus have reached an agreement to cooperate on oil exploration.

- The Independent says the new US counter-insurgency strategy in Baghdad is to carve up the city into sealed areas, a tactic that failed in Vietnam.

- The Oxford Research Group said the US-led war on terror has fuelled more violence, increasing more terrorist attacks across the world.

- North Korea has offered to allow UN nuclear inspectors to enter the country for the first time in over four years.

WILSON